



Street
lights
switched
on
1955

110.04

Cambridge STREET LIGHTS Chronicle

1894

1894

Parkers Piece lamp standard erected, cost £39 [1.1]

1907

1907 01 09

A new development of gas lighting in St Andrew's Street renders the exterior of the New Theatre almost as light as day. By the use of an automatic compressor the power of ordinary incandescent light is increased fourfold but cost of the gas consumed is halved. There are two other installations in Cambridge, one in the locomotive department at the railway station and the other at Messrs Crossman's knitting factory in Norfolk Street. 07 01 09

1907 12 14

Cambridge Gas Light Company told a meeting in St Mark's parish room that they would erect street columns, lanterns and piping, ready for lighting in any street in Newnham where the mains were laid and also lay mains in King's Road and Selwyn Road. They would keep lights burning all night for £2 12s 3d per lamp, including gas, lighting and extinguishing them, maintaining mantles and keeping the lamps clean and in repair. This was agreed unanimously. 07 12 14c

1911

1911 04 08

Barnwell Bridge dangerous due to bright gas lamps dazzling road users [1.11]

1915

1915 03 12

Extinguishing of Lights. A new order, dated March 10, has been issued by the military directing the extinguishing of lights in the Borough. The order is issued by the Competent Military Authority for the district under the powers conferred upon him by Regulation 12 of the Defence of the Realm (Consolidation) Regulations, 1914. The order directs that all lights in the Borough other than lights not visible from the outside of any house, and such public street lamps as a Competent Military Authority, in writing, conditionally permit to be lighted, shall from the 10th inst. and until otherwise ordered, be kept extinguished or obscured between the hours of 7 p.m. and 6a.m. 15 03 12 CIPof

1928

1928 09 01

Motoring friends have remarked that they consider the new island and lamp standard at the bend of Victoria Avenue, Cambridge, a danger to road users, and although the Corporation's object was to prevent accidents they may do more harm than good. The motorist who was unfortunate enough to crash into the standard this week had his vision partially obscured by heavy rain but it would be the easiest thing in the world for a stranger to meet with an accident there. Because of the green background of the trees the standard is not visible to motorists until they are nearly on top of it – why not paint it white? 28 09 01

1934

1934 02 01

Cambridge council is to restore full all-night lighting in the streets following numerous complaints. The gas lighting is obsolete and the time would come when they would have to consider electric lighting. Even policemen were nervous about going down some of the unlighted streets: it is enough to make any policeman nervous when we know what is happening in the way of gangsters, one councillor said. 34 02 01

1935

1935 08 01

After a very close debate Cambridge councillors voted to continue lighting the streets with gas. Councillor Kenney said the lighting was bad and it was ridiculous to think of giving a ten years' contract to gas. Street after street was almost entirely one-sided as regarded lighting. Beyond Hills Road railway bridge all the lamps were on the left hand side and the place was in shadow. Nothing could take the place of electric lamps suspended over the streets. But in London where there were no long lines of electric wires from remote stations there had been a number of breakdowns. How much more would that apply to Cambridge? 35 08 01

1936

1936 07 04

Cambridge street lighting is being brought up to standard. Hills Road and St Andrew's Street are already ablaze. So is Sidney Street. Twenty-three miles of streets will be illuminated by autumn. Side lights properly equipped with seven watt bulbs are all that are now required by motorists. Pedestrians and cyclists are now visible from afar after dark. The lamps are lit automatically by clock devices and soon the familiar figure of the lamp-lighter will disappear from the streets forever 36 07 04

1936 07 04

"Cambridge is now almost entirely covered with new street lamps, which will hardly be of any use until the dark evenings. Suggestions have been made as what to do with them during the long wait – as hanging baskets, clothes lines and even wireless aerials. But it is more than likely that owing to the summer holidays our streets will become so congested that we shall have to turn them into - police traps!" (Ronald Searle cartoon showing policemen with telescopes mounted in crows' nests high on lamp posts) 36 07 04a

1936 07 30

Specimen lamp standards had been put up so that everybody had equal chance of commenting and not one criticism had been received. So standards had been ordered and work was proceeding well. But then criticism poured in from the Preservation Society and Colleges who said the standards were not in keeping with the buildings around them. But while they had antique buildings in King's Parade, they also had modern traffic passing along the road at the modern fast rate. Where were the protests going to stop? 36 07 30b & c

1936 10 15

More than 737 new street lamps had been installed and from Milton Road to Northampton Street there was excellent lighting. But the council had deliberately left a big black patch along the Backs. Discussions had taken place with the Cambridge Preservation Society and Heads of Colleges; Queen's Road was unique, they had to reconcile its beauty and character with the efficient lighting which would protect life 36 10 15

1944

1944 09 12

Gas Company work on streetlights in anticipation of removal of blackout – 44 09 12

1944 09 26

Street lights turned on – 44 09 26, 44 09 27; how it was done – 44 09 28

1946

1949 01 21

Sodium lighting tried in Trumpington street - the first such experiment [1.4]

1946 09 05

Central lamp standard Parker's Piece restored after being damaged on VE night – photo – 46 09 05a
Parkers Piece lamp redesigned; becomes first fluorescent light in England; was replaced by a local metalworks firm, George Lister & Sons, Cambridge. The work was done by foreman Mr Sam Mason, assisted by a young apprentice, Tony Challis, who did the iron scrollwork at the top of the lampost.

1951

1951 07 24

Proposal to convert street lights from gas to electricity [1.5]

1952

1952 09 26

Conversion to sodium lighting, 400 in 4 months [1.6,2.1]

1953

1953 01 03

Cambridge will be one of the first cities in England to be lit almost entirely by "sodium" street lighting. And, said the Mayor, it will be one of the best-lighted in the world. A motorist can appreciate sodium lighting better than any pedestrian can. Black spots and fog are obliterated. Trunk roads will be lit, stopping at the inner ring-road, as this type of light is not thought suitable for the historic city centre. A completely new type of lantern is being used which gives an exceptionally high light output in relation to the electrical energy consumed.

1953 05 01

Cambridge councillors approved a scheme for replacing gas lamps with sodium lighting along 'The Backs'. Ald Hickson wanted assurance this would not be a prelude to Queen's Road becoming a trunk road. It was becoming more frequently used. But the beauty was only apparent during daytime and at night it was only a blur of trees. The same arguments were probably put forward when the present gas

standards were installed and in ten year's time the university would say what a lot of fools they were to oppose the scheme

1953 05 13

Dr A.L. Peck lectured to Cambridge Antiquarian Society on old street lamps of Cambridge, using a collection of lantern slides to illustrate many of the distinctive types of lamp standard, most of which can be date back to 1840 and can still be seen in the streets. They are some of the finest and most varied to be found in any part of the country and merit preservation as valuable examples of the iron founder's work. The most remarkable is one in New Street which for over 50 years stood in front of the Pitt Press in Trumpington Street

1954

1954 02 15

Sir Albert Richardson's "Candles" installed [2.2]

1955

1955 10 07

New fluorescent light Regent St switched on [1.8]

1957

1957 01 18

The Cambridge Design Society considers the proposed new street lamps unsuited to the city. It is basically a glass cylinder five feet high, enclosing fluorescent tubes and mounted on fluted cast-iron columns. The design was adapted by a member of the Royal Fine Arts Commission from one used extensively in Birmingham. But a proposal of this scale should be brought to the notice of a wider public. 57 01 18a [1.9, 1.10]

1960s *The Cambridgeshire Collection has detailed newspaper cuttings files from this date*

1960

1960 06 01

Sir – Orchard Street is one of the minor beauties of Cambridge. Its old gas lamps harmonized well with the curving row of low-roofed cottages, enhanced their picturesqueness and were charming objects in themselves. But they are to be uprooted and replaced by hexagonal aluminium obelisks which are out of character among old tiles and climbing roses. Orchard Street is not a bypass and does not need glaring lights. – Guy Ottewell 60 06 01c also: Opinion on new street lamps divided – Warkworth Terrace – 60 06 02a

1961 01 26

Having installed big sodium lamps to light the radial roads and then put the tall candle-shaped fluorescent lamps in the city centre, the council is now extending electric lighting into the side streets. Until now Hooper Street has been so dark that people avoid it at night and Gwydir Street would be in darkness were it not for two pubs shedding their homely light on the pavement. But the lantern of the gas lamp opposite the end of Sleaford Street is regularly knocked off by big industrial vehicles and elsewhere youths smash the lamp glasses with stones immediately after the gas man has replaced the last breakage. 61 01 26

1973

1973 12

Side street lights switched off, Christmas lights banned [2.4]

1973 10 29

A group of people found an unusual way to spend an afternoon on Saturday - using paint to pick-out the detail on a Cambridge lamp-post. The lamp-post which stands at the paths junction in the middle of Parker's Piece has for many years been painted plain grey. Now after some hard work by five

friends part of it is resplendent in blues, yellows and red. The friends who are all students were led by brothers Sandy and David Cairncross. They obtained permission of the City Surveyor's department before beginning 73 10 29 [2.3]

1987

1987 09 14

The replacement of old lampposts in the centre of Cambridge has aroused opposition. The old 'Candle' lamps were designed in the early 1950s by Sir Albert Richardson, President of the Fine Art Commission. Coun Andrew Duff says they are of considerable interest and are appropriate in the historic centre. Now the County Council is replacing them with modern steel columns which are cheaper to run, give out more light and make the roads safer for motorists and pedestrians. 87 09 14

1987 10 20

Cambridge residents should be given the chance to air their views about old-fashioned lampposts that are being replaced as an economy measure, says Coun Rosensteil. The 'Richardson Candles' along Magdalene Street were designed nearly 40 years ago by Sir Albert Richardson, President of the Royal Fine Arts Commission to fit in with the street. But the County Council claims they are expensive to run and that spare parts are no longer available. However the modern steel columns have angered environmentalists who say they are unsuitable for such a sensitive area. 87 10 20